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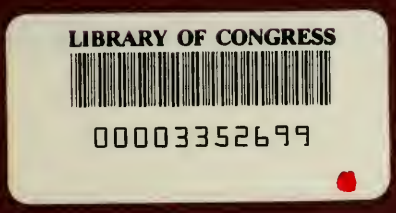

WASHINGTON

ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

UNION LEAGUE CLUB

OF CHICAGO

BY

GEORGE F. HOAR,

FEBRUARY 23, 1903.

Washington, D. C.
PRESS OF GIBSON BROS.,
13TH AND PENNA. AVE.
1903.

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W. D. Bingham
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ADDRESS.

There is no man living anywhere, with whatever honors his life may have been crowned, to whom it would not be an added honor to be invited to address this brilliant company in this famous city on this historic anniversary.

Chicago is conspicuous among the great cities of the world for many things. In two things she stands unrivalled.

Great as she is to-day, wonderful as has been her past, yet she is, beyond all other communities, the city of the future. She may well look forward with an assured and sober confidence to the time when the scepter, which passed away from Rome, shall pass away from London also, and shall be within her grasp.

Chicago is foremost among American cities, foremost, so far as I know, among the cities of the world, in the great virtue of public spirit. If we can judge by the report of her, the citizen of Chicago seems to feel, to a degree not found elsewhere, that her honor is his honor, that her prosperity is his prosperity, and that all he is and has is at her service. It is of this temper that civic greatness is born.

Yet to a people having the right that you have to be proud of their present, and looking forward as you do with a confident courage and hope to a great hereafter, there is a peculiar and special danger. That is the danger of Provincialism, the danger of that spirit which is impatient of the authority of the past, and of the contemporary opinion of mankind. Self-satisfaction, disregard of tradition and precedent and authority, pride in being a law to themselves, these are the besetting sins of successful and self-made

men who have achieved fortune and greatness rapidly. They are likely to be the besetting sins also of cities and of States and Nations that have achieved greatness and success, as you have, with a wonderful rapidity.

There is no Provincialism like the Provincialism which confines a man to his own time. There is no intellectual dullness like the intellectual dullness which comes from the contentment of an absolute self-satisfaction. There is no man and no community so certain of failure as the man or the community to which the past can speak no lesson. But, on the other hand, reverence for the past, a mind open to the lessons taught by other countries and other places, which are in some sort to all of us as a posterity, make even an Insular and Provincial nature Continental and Imperial.

So, gentlemen, it is a sign of profoundest wisdom, it is an admirable augury of happiest omen to Chicago, that this influential Society selects the birthday of George Washington for special commemoration, and means to keep his lineaments and character before her people, especially before her youth.

It is well that such a community still makes the birthday of Washington its great anniversary. Washington, too, did his work well in his own time. He was not without proper respect for ancestry, and proper care for posterity. But he did not dwell too much on either. He was thinking always of the duty which was present and at hand. As Emerson said of him: "He was up to the top of his boots in his own meadow."

I have sometimes thought that we might improve somewhat our method of celebrating the birthdays of our heroes and statesmen. Instead of inviting some living orator, let us, as near as may be, invite the man himself to the celebration. If the people are considering some question in-

volving the public welfare, or the fate of the republic, or what, if not the same thing, are higher and dearer yet, the honor and the conscience of the Republic, let some faithful searcher gather everything the man we would honor has left us on that subject in the way of example or of precept. If the question be whether we shall enter upon a career of foreign dominion, let us celebrate Washington's birthday by recalling what he said on that subject. If the question be what constitutes lawful reason for war; or what is the duty of good citizenship when the country is in a war in which it is wrong; or what are the rights which belong everywhere to that being which we call a people; or what is the line of distinction between power and right, when a strong nation has to deal with a weak one; or whether it be lawful for one people to subdue another to its will; what consent of the governed, if any, be necessary to the exercise of just powers of government; whether there can be taxation rightfully without representation; whether men may be lawfully held in a State as subjects and not citizens—would it not be well, on Abraham Lincoln's birthday, to gather everything he said on those subjects, and what he did when charged with public responsibilities? Would it not be well on Webster's birthday, to call him up to bear his testimony as in visible presence; or, on Jefferson's birthday, to hear what he had to say about it; or, on Sumner's birthday, to listen again to the counsel of that dauntless and righteous spirit? In that way the silent lips of the mighty dead will seem ever speaking their high commands to their countrymen. In that way every generation will still live, and Washington and Webster and Lincoln may still always be present on the spots with which they were familiar in life, still sitting, still deliberating, still debating.

But I will not run that risk to-day. Washington's own words, far better than my own, would be undoubtedly his

most fitting memorial. But I might be thought to convey by indirection a condemnation of some thing or somebody which might be thought out of place in a celebration from which current politics are supposed to be banished.

There is one unerring test of true greatness, whether in literature, or in science, or thought, or action, or character. That is, that it seems to be cotemporaneous with all the generations. The Hebrew Scriptures, the essays of Bacon, the plays of Shakespeare, Homer, and Virgil, and Dante, the character and glory of Alfred and Lincoln and Franklin, Plato, and Socrates, and Cicero, and the Declaration of Independence, speak to us to-day freshly, and without loss of effect by reason of remoteness of time. They would have made a like impression in the time of the Hebrew or the Greek, or the Roman Commonwealth. They will speak with like effect hereafter in all coming time to any generation that hath ears to hear.

That is conspicuously true of Washington. If you were to read of him in Plutarch there would be no sense that he was out of place. He would still be the most perfect of Plutarch's men. If you were to read of him on the page that tells the story of Alfred or the Bruce, or St. Louis of France, or the greatest and best of the men of the Hebrew Commonwealth, there would be no feeling that he did not belong to his age, but only that there was a better and purer and greater Alfred or Bruce or St. Louis or Hebrew Monarch. So I believe there never will be a period in all coming time when a character like that of Washington will excite a sense of incongruity, or of antiquity, but only the natural feeling that a character of supreme excellence has been bestowed by God upon man.

It is the great good fortune of the people of America, especially of the youth of America, that we have for our National hero a character whom they can take as a model

of behavior in every condition, every transaction, every occupation in life. I cannot think of any question of morality, of courtesy, or noble and elevated behavior, of expediency in the conduct of doubtful and difficult affairs, which a young man or an old man could not safely answer by asking himself and telling himself what George Washington would have done in a like case. I do not know of any other nation on earth that possesses or has possessed such a model.

I need not dwell upon the vast advantage of such an example over a mere lifeless code of general rules for the conduct of life. Indeed it is not necessary to remind you here and in this presence that the Author of our religion has directed that mankind be taught Christian principles and Christian character by a great Exemplar. The power of the great religious orders in the great churches, a power which is among the wonders of history, is due largely to the example of the saints who founded them, or for whom they are named.

Now in claiming for George Washington that he was an example of all excellence which the American youth may with safety take as his model of character and conduct for every condition and every transaction in life, do not let me be suspected of falling into our National habit of exaggeration. I wish to cite a few tributes from, if not hostile, at least impartial sources of the highest authority.

There is no time to-day to cite much of the overwhelming and concurrent testimony of great Englishmen, statesmen, and writers of history, and of great authorities on the Continent, to the primacy of George Washington among mankind. The only name likely to be thought of anywhere for parallel or comparison is that in whose glory we also have an inherited title to share—that of Alfred.

We need have no misgivings about Washington. By

this time, more than a century from his death, his life at home and in public is well known. The case is all in.

"Whatever record leap to light, he never shall be shamed."

The youth of America need not depend on American authority for an estimate of this supreme and faultless character. The great historians of other countries are not behind ours in their tributes to his greatness. Earl Russell said of him:

"Without the genius of Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte, he has a far purer fame, as his ambition was of a higher and holier nature. In modern history no man had done such great things without the soil of selfishness or the stain of a groveling ambition. Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, attained a higher elevation, but the love of dominion was the spur that drove them on. John Hampden, William Russell, Algernon Sydney, may have had motives as pure, and an ambition as unstained; but they fell. To George Washington nearly alone in modern times has it been given to accomplish a wonderful revolution, and yet to remain to all future times the theme of a people's gratitude, and an example of virtuous and beneficent power."

Lord Erskine, the greatest of English advocates, inscribed one of his works to Washington, declaring, "You are the only being for whom I have an awful reverence." Charles James Fox said of him in the House of Commons, "The illustrious man before whom all borrowed greatness sinks into insignificance." Lord Brougham, at the close of his public life, repeated the estimate he had given near the beginning of it: "Until time shall be no more, will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of Washington." And again, at another time, Lord Brougham says, "Washington was the greatest man of our own or any age."

At another time Fox says of him: "A character of virtues so happily tempered by one another, and so wholly unalloyed with any vices as that of Washington is hardly to be found on the pages of history."

Mr. Green, the author of the history of the English people, says of him:

"No nobler figure ever stood in the forefront of a nation's life. Washington was grave and courteous in address; his manners were simple and unpretending; his silence and the serene calmness of his temper spoke of a perfect self-mastery. But there was little in his outer bearing to reveal the grandeur of soul which lifts his figure with all the simple majesty of an ancient statue out of the smaller passions and meaner impulses of the world around him. It was only as the weary fight went on that the colonists discovered, however slowly and imperfectly, the greatness of their leader, his clear judgment, his heroic endurance, his silence under difficulties, his calmness in the hour of danger or defeat, the patience with which he waited, the quickness and hardness with which he struck, the lofty and serene sense of duty that never swerved from its task through resentment or jealousy, that never through war or peace felt the touch of a meaner ambition, that knew no aim save that of guarding the freedom of his fellow countrymen, and no personal longing save that of returning to his own fireside when their freedom was secured. It was almost unconsciously that men learned to cling to Washington with a trust and faith such as few other men have won, and to regard him with a reverence which still hushes us in presence of his memory."

No other man uttered the best thought of Scotland as it was uttered by Robert Burns. When somebody in his presence proposed the health of Pitt, I think then Prime Minister, Burns said, "I give the health of a better man, George Washington." This was not very long after Burns

had given, during the American War, the toast, "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause."

Count Herzburg, for thirty years Frederick the Great's famous minister of foreign affairs said, that Washington surpassed men in his great virtues and qualities, even the most celebrated of antiquity.

Lord Byron's tribute is well known:

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the great,
Where neither guilty glory glows
Nor despicable state?
Yes, One, the first, the last, the best,
The Cincinnatus of the West
Whom Envy dared not hate,
Bequeathed the name of Washington,
To make men blush there was but one.

"No one who has not been in England can have a just idea of the admiration expressed among all parties for General Washington. It is a common observation that he is not only the most illustrious, but the most meritorious character that has yet appeared."

Rufus King to General Hamilton, 1797.

Mr. Gladstone said that Washington was the purest figure in history. He declares:

"If, among all the pedestals supplied by history for public characters of extraordinary nobility and purity, I saw one higher than all the rest, and if I were required, at a moment's notice, to name the fittest occupant for it, I think my choice, at any time during the last forty-five years, would have lighted, and it would now light, upon Washington."

Talleyrand said of him:

"His fame is beyond comparison with that of others."

Even China has placed in his monument a stone which declares: "Can any man of ancient or modern times fail to pronounce Washington peerless?"

I will add one other tribute of exquisite beauty, from an American source. It is from the most fastidious of critics, Fisher Ames:

"Consider for a moment, what a reputation it was; such as no man ever before possessed by so clear a title, and in so high a degree. His fame seemed in its purity to exceed even its brightness. Office took honor from his acceptance, but conferred none. Ambition stood awed and darkened by his shadow. For where, through the wide earth, was the man so vain as to dispute precedence with him; or what were the honors that could make the possessor Washington's superior? Refined and complex as the ideas of virtue are, even the gross could discern in his life the infinite superiority of her rewards. Mankind perceived some change in their ideas of greatness; the splendor of power, and even of the name of conqueror, had grown dim in their eyes. They did not know that Washington could augment his fame; but they knew and felt that the world's wealth, and its empire, too, would be a bribe far beneath his acceptance."

Works of Fisher Ames, Vol. 2, p. 78.

Probably no American public man of Washington's time—certainly none who deserved the name of statesman—differed so entirely in character, mental traits, and political opinion from Washington as Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson left the Cabinet of his great chief of his own accord to become the leader of the party opposed to his policies—a party which took possession of the government four years after Washington's retirement and a little more than one year after Washington's death. But Jefferson, late in his own life, when it was suggested to him that the

fame of Washington might lessen with the lapse of years, looked up to the sky and answered: "Washington's fame will go on increasing until the brightest constellation in yonder heavens is called by his name."

So we have the right to say of him as the old Monk said of King Arthur:

"The Old World knows not his peer, nor will the future show us his equal; he alone towers over other kings, better than the past ones, and greater than those that are to be."

If you wish to make a study of this great man you will do well not to confine yourselves to any one biography. When you have read carefully the best lives of Washington you will have become familiar not only with the greatest human character in history, but with a historic epoch of large and enduring influence upon the destinies of mankind. Several historians of great distinction and of great variety of intellectual quality, but all of the first rank, have made the life of Washington their theme. You will do well to study them all, perhaps to study them all at the same time. When you deal with a great event, political or military, it may be well to have the narrative of it as told by each of these authors in the mind at the same time.

The first of these in the order of time, as in intellectual rank, is the life of Washington by John Marshall, the great Chief Justice of the United States. Marshall was a grave and serious-minded man, indifferent to the graces of style, or to the art by which an author entertains his readers and relieves the tediousness of a narrative without departing from sobriety and propriety. His account of Washington's early life and the military transactions of the Revolutionary war are lacking in spirit and picturesqueness, although absolutely trustworthy, as the character of the narrator would make us sure. Marshall's account of the political history of the country from the close of the Revolution to Washington's death in 1799, is that of a very great

statesman and Constitutional lawyer who himself had a large share in the transactions of which he has to tell. No other man who ever lived was so capable of understanding the great principles settled in that day, on which the enduring foundations of the Republic are builded. He enjoyed Washington's fullest confidence. He belonged to Washington's own State. He was a leader in the legislature of Virginia, where the struggles were almost as important as those in either House of Congress. He was one of the leaders in the Virginia Convention that adopted the Constitution, a convention on whose decision the fate of the Constitution largely depended. Washington offered him a seat in his Cabinet, which he declined. He offered him the place of Envoy to France, which he declined. He was afterward a member of Congress, Secretary of State and, as you know, Chief Justice of the United States for thirty-four years. It is hardly too much to say that but for his great judgments the Constitution of the United States could not successfully have worked in practice as a mechanism of government. But as is commonly the case with biographies written so near the lifetime of the subject, the author had not access to a great deal of the material which afterward came to light, necessary for a perfect execution of his task.

Jared Sparks, the editor of Washington's writings in twelve volumes, and also the author of a life, is perhaps unequaled among our historic investigators in the unerring accuracy of historic judgment. He lacks grace of style, enthusiasm, spirit and imagination. But he was the most conscientious and industrious of investigators. He had access not only to Washington's own papers but to the family papers of a great many of his contemporaries. He rummaged the National archives and those of most if not all of the old thirteen States, and he knew well what was important and what was unimportant. He sticks to

his fact like a mathematician. What he says is true *is* true, and you need not trouble yourself to inquire further.

Washington Irving brought to his task industry, integrity, the charm of that matchless style which makes him still accounted, so far as that is concerned, the foremost of American prose writers, or in that respect at least to share that lofty place with Hawthorne alone. Mr. Irving liked to delight and entertain as well as to instruct his readers. In his pages Washington steps down from his pedestal, and while there is nothing found which tarnishes that pure fame, the hero leaves the rank of demigods and mingles with mortal men.

Edward Everett also has written a brief life, prepared originally for the Encyclopædia Britannica, and expanded into a small volume. You can read it in two or three hours. It will repay perusal as a good summing up of the great career of the Father of his Country, although there is nothing in it to enhance the fame either of the subject or the author. It is a pity that Lord Macaulay, on whose recommendation Mr. Everett was asked to write that Memoir, could not have undertaken it himself. But if I cannot speak with enthusiasm of Mr. Everett's life of Washington, I can hardly find language to express myself, in commending to you, and to the youth of the present generation, Mr. Everett's masterly oration upon the same theme. It is, so far as I know, and, so far as I can judge, foremost among the masterpieces of eulogistic oratory in any tongue or in any generation. It was undertaken by Mr. Everett for the purpose of purchasing and preserving Mt. Vernon. It was delivered and repeated in the chief cities and large towns of the country and, with the proceeds of a few other lectures and essays by Mr. Everett on kindred subjects, yielded about ninety thousand dollars of the fund of one hundred thousand required to redeem Mt. Vernon. Mr. Everett sketches the intel-

lectual and physical character of Washington, from his splendid youth, a model of manly strength and beauty, perfect in the qualities and accomplishments of the gentleman and the soldier, but wise and thoughtful beyond his years, inspiring at the outset of his career that love and confidence which are usually earned only by a long life of service, through all the acts of that mighty drama of which he was the foremost character, the observed of all eyes, the beloved of all true American hearts, shaping and wielding the destinies of his country in her great birthtime, down to his death at Mount Vernon, in his own home, the wife of his youth by his side, amid the benedictions and the sorrow of his countrymen. The story is depicted by the marvelous genius of the great artist on a canvas that shall endure as long as the fame of Washington himself. I should like to repeat to you some of the great passages from that great oration, especially the contrast between Mt. Vernon, the simple dwelling place of America's illustrious hero and Father, the home of George Washington and Martha, his beloved, loving and faithful wife, and the splendor of Blenheim House, the monumental pile where the gratitude of England poured itself out in unrestrained lavishness upon her great warrior and victor; and the beautiful close where the orator conceives the fame of Washington passing from the narrow strip of territory fringing the Atlantic shore, which was all his country occupied when he died, from the southern plains to the western lakes, beyond the Ohio, beyond the Mississippi, along with the stupendous trail of immigration from east to west, which, bursting into States as it moved westward, was then already threading the western prairies, swarming through the portals of the Rocky Mountains and winding down their slopes to the Pacific, and then in the prophetic imagination of the orator, traveling with the Silver Queen of heaven through sixty degrees of longitude, and not parting company with her till

she walks in her brightness through the golden gate of California, and passes serenely on to hold midnight court with her Australian stars.

Mr. Everett adds that there and only there, in barbarous archipelagoes, as yet untrodden by civilized man, the name of Washington is unknown, and there, too, when they swarm with enlightened millions, new honors shall be paid with ours to his memory.

But the rich silver tones of the trumpet voice of the unequaled orator, speaking as Pericles might be conceived to have spoken to an Athenian audience in the great day of Grecian eloquence, still linger in my memory and forbid the sacrilegious attempt.

But, after all, among the e'aborate biographies of Washington the best portraiture of him in literature is the life of him by my colleague, Henry Cabot Lodge. It may be trusted thoroughly as to its facts and its judgmtens. A flood of light has been poured in upon the subject by the material which has been uncovered since the time of Marshall and Sparks and Irving. The memoir is full enough to tell the story of the great and important transactions of Washington's life, and still compact enough to retain its hold on the interest and attention of the reader from the beginning to the end. Mr. Lodge has a statesman's capacity to deal with and to judge of the concerns of State, the enthusiasm of an orator, the literary skill of a trained and practiced writer, and the industry of a thorough historic investigator. If you have time but for one of these biographies, I commend to you that of Mr. Lodge as, on the whole, the best, although he has to contend with such great competitors as Marshall and Sparks and Irving.

You should also make yourselves familiar, not only for a description of Washington, but as a masterpiece of splendid oratory, with the almost forgotten oration of Fisher Ames,

delivered before the Massachusetts Legislature just after Washington's death. It is a tribute of exquisite beauty, from an American source. Mr. Ames was the most fastidious of judges and of critics. But he knew Washington, in whose first administration he was, although a young man and in feeble health, a great Federalist leader. His speech on Jay's Treaty ranks with that of John Marshall on the case of Jonathan Robbins, and Webster's reply to Hayne, as one of the three greatest speeches ever delivered in either House of the American Congress. It is said that that speech and the speech of Chief Justice Marshall, which I just mentioned, are the only speeches ever made in the American Congress that converted a hostile majority on a great political question on which the House was divided by party lines. Mr. Ames's thought is profound and wise as that of Burke, his style full of life and spirit, impressive and sententious like that of the Proverbs of Solomon. Image crowds upon image in the inexhaustible fertility of his mind, keeping the mind of the hearer and the reader constantly stimulated with expectation and curiosity, and creating constant surprise and delight.

I think I ought also to commend to your attention two very remarkable addresses by the late Robert C. Winthrop. He delivered the oration at the laying of the corner-stone of the Washington Monument, July 4, 1848, and again an oration in commemoration of its completion February 22, 1885, thirty-seven years thereafter. It is a curious coincidence that he associated his name forever with the beginning and the finishing of that monument, as Mr. Webster is associated by two wonderful orations with the foundation and the completion of the monument at Bunker Hill. Mr. Winthrop's addresses are in all respects worthy of comparison with those of Webster. These four orations will stand together at the very head of that department of oratory.

When you have read these lives and read also Washington's own great addresses—his farewell to the Governors of the States when he laid down his commission in 1783; his Farewell Address when he laid down the Presidency in 1797—you will have seen Washington as he was. You will see him as if you had gazed upon a photograph of his very soul. You will know by heart the greatest man in all history; one of the very few and the greatest of the very few great men who have lived wholly for their country and not at all for themselves, and who, as a great orator says, appear in human annals "like five or six lighthouses on as many thousand miles of coast."

It was said by Richard Steele of a beautiful and accomplished Englishwoman, Lady Elizabeth Hastings, that to love her was a liberal education. If you have studied and taken into your hearts and souls the character of Washington as depicted by these great authorities, you have a liberal education in the essentials of American citizenship. You have laid the foundation in character for anything that can be demanded of you by your country in war or in peace, for soldier, statesman, citizen.

Now in commending to you the sources by which you can possess yourself of a just conception of the great character of the Father of our Country from an original investigation, I have left little space to say anything about him from myself. But surely it is better so. What can I say which is worth saying upon such a theme? Washington died one hundred and four years ago next December, From that day to this his life and his praise have been the theme of oratory and poetry the country through, on every recurring anniversary of his birthday which, like the birthday of the country itself, is one of our two great national holidays.

The designer of the noble shaft which towers above the city which bears his name has with rare felicity designed

that emblem of the simple and majestic character of Washington. There is no ornament or sculpture or delicate carving to attract or fascinate the eye. Simplicity, grandeur, just proportion, strength, endurance are its characteristics, as they were his characteristics. It must ever take a high rank among great and majestic public works. In a clear morning, when the sky is full of light or some delicate cloud moves over its summit, far above the streets and towers and spires of the city, its shining point suggests the lines of the Englishman, Doctor Aiken, written while Washington was yet living:

> Point of that pyramid, whose solid base
> Rests firmly founded in a Nation's trust,
> Which, while the gorgeous palace sinks in dust,
> Shall stand sublime, and fill its ample space.

Think how poor were Washington's resources! During a large part of the time when he was besieging the British army in Boston, he had scarcely powder enough to fire a salute. His few cannon had been dragged by oxen across New England from Ticonderoga. He had no money to pay his soldiers; no drill-officers to teach his raw recruits military discipline; no military text-books for his engineers. His life was almost a solitude amid the jealousies and strifes which existed in that day, in quite as large degree as now, among his generals and officers, and (what has happily passed by now), among the troops of the different colonies. The inexhaustible pecuniary resources of England promised an inexhaustible supply of troops, native or mercenary. His great antagonists had the support of a powerful navy. I would not undervalue the navy of the revolution, whose great service to the cause of independence has been so much overlooked. Indeed, it is doubtful whether without it the war for liberty could have been brought to a successful close. But its chief service was in destroying English commerce and not as an

aid to our military operations. So in the time of framing the Constitution and in administering the government for the first eight years, Washington had nowhere to look either for example or for instruction. All the paths he trod had to be broken out by himself and his great companions and associates. We who find our path broken, macadamized, leveled, blazed by the sure and safe precedents of one hundred and twenty-five years can hardly understand the difficulties which beset Washington. And yet, in his whole life, from the time when, but a youth of twenty-four, he gave his wise but vain counsel to General Braddock, and brought home all the laurels of that most disastrous expedition, to the time when, full of years and honors, he left to his countrymen his Farewell Address—that almost inspired political Bible, the adherence to which ever has brought and ever will bring to us safety, prosperity, and glory, the departure from which is the path to danger, ruin and shame—he never made a mistake and never gave unwise counsel to his countrymen.

There are some characters, unhappily few, of whom we never think as struggling with or conquering temptation. Sin did not beset them. I suppose this was never yet literally and perfectly true of any man or woman. Yet it was as nearly true of George Washington as of any man or woman. Integrity, unselfish and unambitious service, industry that sought no repose while it remained to be done, unhesitating self-sacrifice, purity not only unsullied but untempted, were all his. The temptation to evil never seems to have beset that lofty nature, nor besieged that impregnable fortress. The Devil is an ass. But he never was such an ass as to waste his time tempting George Washington.

Washington's style, in general, is somewhat artificial, with a little tendency on ordinary occasions to the somewhat inflated, latinized diction of which Doctor Johnson

had set the fashion in his time. But he rises often, when he forgets the language and is intent on the thought, into a noble and vigorous speech. Some of the best examples of good English are to be found in the untutored speech and writing of boys. Washington compiled or copied or composed, in early youth, a series of rules of behavior in company and conversation which ends with a maxim certainly not to be improved upon either in style or substance: "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire—conscience."

Mr. Winthrop, with that *curiosa felicitas* both of thought and phrase, for which he is unsurpassed among the orators of the generation which has just left the stage, said in his last great public address, speaking to the youth of the country: "Keep ever in your mind and before your mind's eye the loftiest standard of character. Strive to approximate that lofty standard, and measure your integrity and your patriotism by your nearness to it or your departure from it. The prime meridian of universal longitude on sea or land may be at Greenwich or at Paris or where you will. The prime meridian of pure, disinterested, patriotic, exalted human character, will be marked forever by yonder Washington obelisk."

Washington's virtues were the corner-stone virtues. They were the virtues which lie at the foundation of all civil society as well as of noble individual character. It is not these which commonly excite the imagination or strike the fancy. It is not these which delight audiences in the portrayal. Poets celebrate the beauty of the morning, the Assyrian sunrise and the Paphian sunset, the fragrance of the rose, the verdure of the grass, the softness of the gale. They do not write odes to gravitation or to mathematics, or to order, or to the great laws which preserve health. So we do not find that veracity, judgment, prudence, disinterestedness, justice, sobriety, stir the blood

and quicken the pulse when we talk of them. But they are the virtues to which human life owes its safety and human society its civilization.

I would say it in all reverence (surely we have a right to say it), if it be true that God has made man in his own image, and if it be true that divinity has come to the earth to be an example to humanity, then it is not impious for us to claim that humanity has sometimes attained something of the divine image in which it was created, and has been able to copy the divine Example to imitate which it is invited. The virtues of Washington are the virtues which we ascribe in our humble, imperfect and faraway conception to divinity.

Think of his absolute veracity! He conducted with his own hand a vast correspondence, enough to tax to its uttermost the strength of mind and brain and body of an athlete even if he had had to bear no other burden of public care. His published correspondence fills many large volumes, and there is a great deal, I suppose, still unpublished. But there is not a trace of duplicity, of concealment, of saying one thing to one man and another to another, of assurances of respect or goodwill that do not come from the heart, such as, I am sorry to say, disfigure the correspondence of some of his famous and honored cotemporaries. The little fable invented by Weems, his enthusiastic biographer, has become the standing jest of many a generation of irreverent boys. But nobody ever doubted or ever will doubt that George Washington could not tell a lie, could not act a lie, could not think a lie; that a lie could not live in his presence, or that all falsehood and dissimulation would slink abashed and confounded from the gaze of those pure eyes and from that perfect witness.

"I do not remember," said Washington in 1786, "that in the course of my life I ever forfeited my word, or broke a promise made to any one."

"I never say anything of a man that I have the smallest scruple of saying to him."

This virtue of absolute veracity deserves to rank highest among those which our humanity can attain. Men of all civilized nations pay an unconscious tribute to it when they resent the imputation of falsehood as even a greater affront than the charge of cowardice. Indeed falsehood is the very essence of cowardice. The man who lies, lies, usually, because he is afraid to tell the truth, because he does not dare to stand by his action or his thought. The great nations of history, the great characters of history, are those who are most famed for the supreme virtue of truth. The only heroes of the nation from whom we derive our own lineage, who deserve to be named in the same day with Washington are the Englishman King Alfred, and the Irishman, the Duke of Wellington. King Alfred was called "the truth teller." Wellington was called the truth lover.

> Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named.
> Truth-lover was our English Duke.

He had a weighing and balancing mind. His intellect was like a pair of accurately adjusted scales. He did not often, especially in civil affairs, originate the policies upon which he acted. But he listened carefully and patiently to every counsel from which he could get instruction, and then brought it in the end to the sure test of his own unerring judgment. He weighed the advice of his great counsellors, the claims of contending parties, and of Jefferson and Hamilton and Adams and Pickering, in a balance as infallible as the golden scales which the Eternal hung forth in Heaven.

> "Betwixt Astrea and the Scorpion sign"

in which, according to Milton, the arch-rebel read and knew his fate.

There are young men before me who I am sure aspire to take hereafter an honorable part in the service of the country. You have not received the priceless advantage and blessing of American citizenship as beggars or mendicants who receive a benefit which they never return. What your country has given you you mean to return again to her. You mean, in the simple language of the oath taken by the humblest official, "to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic." The foreign enemy is not likely to put your manhood to any severe proof, or it will be a proof of your physical courage alone. The enemy that will demand your moral courage for the encounter is the domestic enemy. He will appear under many names, in various guise. But the unerring test by which you will detect him will be by comparing his principles, purposes and character with those of George Washington. If any man tell you that the counsels of George Washington have grown musty and rusty; that they are not for large nations, but only for little ones; that, as a great newspaper said the other day, a man who is now in the company of George Washington is in bad company, because his policies and counsels are bad for the America of the present day—mark and distrust that man as the domestic enemy of your country. He may be sincere; he may be misguided; he may be carried away by a spasm of popular excitement; he may be obeying the behest of party. But, none the less, indeed all the more for that, is he the dangerous enemy of the peace and prosperity of the United States.

Mr. Everett's great oration, of which I spoke just now, was delivered in the few years preceding 1860, when the angry threatenings of civil war and disunion were heard all round our national horizon. Mr. Everett called upon his countrymen, as it seemed for a time, in vain, to forget, to turn a deaf ear to these unpatriotic counsels, to this

mad cry of treason and disunion, and return once more to the patriotic counsel of Washington. It seemed, for a time, as if the appeal were unheeded. But the spasm of popular madness and rage passed by, and Washington resumed his place again as our supreme counsellor and leader. He became once more the example and idol of every American soldier and statesman, and the Farewell Address became once again the political Bible of every American. Doubt not that this shall happen again and again. Other temptations will come to us, and party spirit, like Satan sitting at the ear of Eve, will speak again its baleful counsel in the ear of the people. Popular excitement will be kindled by the lust of empire and passion for conquest. The eyes of the people may be dazzled for a time by a false and tinsel military glory. But while the portrait of Washington hangs in every village; while his statues adorn our chief cities; while his monument is found in every State; while his life is on the shelf of every home; while the detail of his great career is studied in every university; while his image is in the heart of every youth, the people will come back again to the wise, sober and just counsel in following which lies the path to a true glory and a true safety. The American people will never long go astray so long as to every great question of national policy or national duty they know what Washington would have said, and know what Washington did say.

If any man would test, as with a touch-stone, any party or political war-cry of to-day, let him think before he grow too enthusiastic if he can imagine GeorgeWashington uttering it. If he can, he is safe enough to utter it himself. If he cannot, he had better try to find another.

Who ever thinks of George Washington as stopping to consider popularity or public sentiment or political or personal advantage to himself by pleasing the people when he

had to determine a question of duty? He was as unmoved by the breeze of popular opinion as the summit of the mountain that bears his name. It is for that reason that the reverence in which his countrymen hold him is as enduring and as unshaken as the mountain summit.

I am no blind worshipper of the Past. I do not believe that Renown and Grace are dead. I am no pessimist or alarmist. I am certainly no misanthropist. While there are many men who have served their country better in their generation than I have in mine, I yield to no man in love for the Republic, or in pride in my country, and in my countrymen who are making to-day her honorable history. We may err in our day. Our fathers erred in theirs. Yet our generation is better than those who went before it. The coming generations will be better than we are. The Republic where every man has his share in the Government is better than the Monarchy, or the Oligarchy, or the Aristocracy. Our Republic is better than any other Republic. To-day is better than yesterday, and to-morrow will be better than to-day. But while each generation has its own virtues, each generation has its own dangers, and its own mistakes, and its own shortcomings.

The difference between the generations of any country with a history is commonly not one of principle, but of emphasis. The doctrine of 1776, when we won our independence, planted our country on the eternal principles of equality of individuals and of nations in political rights, and declared that no man and no people had the right to judge of the fitness of any other for self-government. In 1787 the Constitution was builded on the doctrine that there were domains within which the Government had no right to enter, and that there were powers which the people would not commit to any authority, State or National. The doctrine of 1861 and the years which followed, declared the natural right of every man to his own freedom, what-

ever might be his race or color; and the natural right of every man to make his dwelling wherever on the face of the earth he might think fit. These truths will, perhaps, be accepted to-day as generally as they were accepted then. But if accepted at all they are accepted by the intellect only, and not by the heart. They are not much talked about, except to ridicule them, to refine about them, or to find some plausible reason why they should not be applied.

The orator of to-day puts his emphasis on Glory, on Empire, on Power, on Wealth. We live under, and love, and we still shed our heart's blood for the same flag which floated over our fathers, and for which they were ready to die. But it sometimes seems that the flag has a different meaning, whether it float over the Capitol or the ship of war, or the regiment on the march, or the public assembly. We no longer speak of it, except coldly and formally, as the symbol of Liberty; but only as the symbol of power, or of a false, cheap, tinsel glory.

I think the popular reverence for Washington, and Lincoln, and for Sumner, and for Webster, is not abated. But yet few political speakers quote to-day the great sentences which made them so famous, or the great principles to which they devoted their lives.

While, as I said, I have a profound respect for the opinion of my countrymen, it is not for that opinion formed in excitement or in haste or under pressure of political necessity. It is for the opinion formed, as Washington formed his, soberly, quietly, calmly, through sober, second thought.

There is scarcely a shabby or sorry story of any country, certainly in the history of free nations, which is not a story of a popular delusion in which for a time nearly the whole community shared. The martyrdom of Socrates, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the persecution which drove the Pilgrims to Leyden, the witchcraft delusion, the

Compromise measures, the brief rise and spread of Know-Nothingism, all represent completely the desire of the people for the time being.

There have been many such delusions in the history of the American people. But, so far, the American people have outgrown them, have repented of them, and have atoned for them. Indeed we can hardly lament that they have happened, when we think that if they had not happened the sublime repentance and atonement also would not have happened. We may lament the long and gloomy and terrible years of Slavery and of Rebellion; and yet without Slavery and Rebellion we should have never known the heroism of the American people, or the quality of our splendid youth of 1861. We cannot explain why it is that an omnipotent and benignant Providence has suffered evil to exist in the universe He has created. But at least this is true. Without evil there could have been no virtue; without the possibility of sin, there could have been no possibility of righteousness; without the Athenian mob, there could have been no Socrates; without George III and Lord North, there could have been no Washington; without Slavery and Rebellion, there could have been no Lincoln.

Another lesson the Republic may learn from Washington is its sensitiveness to the individual touch. I do not think that it would be true if I were to say that the moral power of a single will and a single character is as strong in a popular Government as in a Monarchy or a Despotism. But I am sometimes tempted to say so when I think of the many instances where the whole current of our history has been turned by one man.

I should like, if I had time, to give a great many examples, easily to be found, where the fate of a nation, and many more where the fate of a generation has depended upon the will and the purpose and the character of a sin-

gle individual. Many of Washington's contemporaries believed that but for the confidence felt in him the conflict with England could not have been maintained. Mr. Jefferson, I think it was, said later: "We can all hang together, so long as we have you to hang to." It does not seem likely that the great political revolution which overthrew the Federal party after its twelve years of power, could have been accomplished but for the individual skill of Jefferson. I suppose most lawyers agree that but for the interpretation of the Constitution, supported by the great Judge Marshall, and carried into effect by his authority, the mechanism of our Constitution would have failed. The spot where I am now speaking would, in my opinion, as I think can be clearly established, have been at this moment part of a great slave-holding Empire but for the far-reaching sagacity and untiring energy of Rufus Putnam, the founder and father of Ohio, who put a new life into the dead Ordinance which consecrated this region to religion, education, and Liberty, and himself led the first colony down the Ohio to Marietta. There have been in our own day great measures pregnant with history, and with the fate of parties, won or lost by a single vote.

Washington is by no means the only conspicuous example in history, God be thanked, of a man whose public conduct was determined absolutely by the sense of duty. But he is the most conspicuous and lofty example. He is the best example of absolute conscientiousness accompanied by unerring wisdom in a place of power, where his action determined the fate of a nation, and was successful in achieving the most fortunate results.

The fate of the nation depends in the last resort on individual character. Everything in human government, like everything in individual conduct, depends, in the end, upon the sense of duty. Whatever safeguards may

be established, however complicated or well adjusted the mechanism, you come to a place somewhere where safety depends upon somebody having the will to do right when it is in his power and may be his interest to do wrong. When the people were considering the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, one of our wisest statesmen said that the real and only security for a Republic is when the rulers have the same interest as the people. If they have not, constitutional restraints will break down somewhere, except for the sense of duty of the rulers.

All elections depend upon this principle. You may multiply election officers and returning boards, you may provide for an appeal to courts of first resort or last resort. But in the end you must come somewhere to a point where the sense of public duty is stronger than party spirit, or your election is but a sort of fighting, or, if not that, a sort of cheating. The same thing is true of the individual voter, or of the legislator who is to elect the Senator, or the governor who is to appoint the judge, or the executive officer, or the judge who is to interpret the Constitution or the statute and decide the cause, or the juror who is to find the fact. On these men depend the safety and the permanence of the Republic. On these men depend life, liberty, and property. And yet each of them has to make that choice. Each has to decide whether he will be influenced by ambition or by party spirit or the desire for popular favor or the fear of popular disfavor or the love of money, on the one side, or by the sense of duty on the other.

So, in the last resort, the destiny of the Republic, like the destiny of the individual (and, in the case of an individual, character and destiny are the same thing), depends upon individual will. Will the individual will choose what is right and not what is wrong? Now this choice is largely affected by what we call strength of will;

by that habit of the soul which enables man to adhere to its deliberate purposes and principles, formed when reason is unaffected by passion or by desire, against the pressure and excitement of an immediate demand; that character of will which, as Wordsworth says in his "Happy Warrior"—

> "in the heat of conflict keeps the law
> In calmness made, and sees what it foresaw."

The great single purpose of moral education, must be to induce the will to adhere to its general, permanent and deliberately conceived purpose, in spite of the motives which appeal to it with special strength at the time of the choice or action. In other words, to give a strength to resolution which will overcome the strength of temptation.

Of course, the first and perhaps the greatest thing to be accomplished is to get habit upon the side of virtue. "Happy is the man whose habits are his friends." To Washington no duty, however obscure, was unimportant, and no deviation from duty, however trifling, was possible.

I said just now, quoting from a great orator, that a few great men who have lived wholly for their country and not at all for themselves, and who alone can be thought of for comparison with Washington, appear in human annals like five or six lighthouses on as many thousand miles of coast. Even to complete that list men must go to Roman or Grecian story, where you cannot verify the record. How much of their glory Plutarch's characters owe to Plutarch, no critic can tell you to-day.

All the great men of antiquity, who in the boldest imagination might be compared with Washington, failed in accomplishing their desire for their country. Epaminondas died in battle. Socrates died by public sentence. Aristides was ostracized and banished. Cato died a suicide and an exile. The destruction of the Republic he served speedily followed the death of each.

In later times Wellington was the instrument of saving Europe from the ambition of Napoleon. He was a high example of sincerity and strength and unselfishness in peace. But he had at his command the resources of a great Empire, and the indomitable English military spirit, indomitable from the beginning of her history save by the power which Washington organized and led. No man can doubt that with Wellington's resources Washington could have accomplished Wellington's results. No one can say that with Washington's resources Wellington could have accomplished the results of Washington.

But his achievement in war is the least of Washington's title to glory. Through his influence a great Republic was constructed and inaugurated on principles unknown until his time to history. He laid the foundation of our Empire not on military strength, but on Liberty and Law. The Constitution framed by the Convention over which he presided, which would not have been adopted but for his influence, and which he inaugurated, was a new and untried experiment, without either example or model in human history. Wellington, on the other hand, was a defender of the existing order of things. Many an abuse and injustice was prolonged through his influence.

No American, I think no lover of virtue anywhere, would seek to diminish or to darken the glory of Alfred, that "King to Justice dear"—

> "Mirror of Princes, indigent renown
> Might search the starry ether for a crown
> Equal to his deserts."

The glory of Alfred is ours also. The laws he gave have come down to us. We are of the blood and lineage of the country where for more than a thousand years the descendants of the great Saxon have occupied the throne. We have certainly no desire to cultivate that temper which, when-

ever goodness or greatness anywhere be mentioned, is eager always to declare that something or somebodyelse is better. But the witnesses whom we have cited, who declared Washington's primacy among mankind, are English witnesses of the highest title to be believed. Not one of them has given his judgment without considering the name of King Alfred.

We may concede to King Alfred perhaps an integrity and an unselfish devotion to his country unsurpassed even by that of Washington himself. But it is to be remembered that the difficult task of rallying the people of England to the expulsion of a band of piratic invaders, was far less than of sustaining a civilized warfare for eight years against the fleets and armies and inexhaustible treasure of Great Britain. When Alfred won his throne he gained a kingly power. He had a kingly power at his command. He had not, as Washington had, to reconcile hostile factions, to bring into accord jealous and rival States, to inaugurate a Government, the like of which was to that time unknown to the experience of mankind. We can not only believe, we can be sure that in Alfred's place Washington would have ecomplished everything that Alfred did. No man can be sure that in Washington's place Alfred would have been able to accomplish what Washington did.

One figure remains, and one alone, who in the opinion of mankind may share with Washington his lofty pinnacle. His is an American name also; a name among the priceless treasures of the great State within whose borders we come together.

Never were two men more unlike in every lineament that made up their mental and physical portraiture than George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. They seemed to come to the same high place from opposite quarters and by diverse paths. Washington, with his quiet and grave manner, with his seriousness, his earnestness, with the

stately beauty and dignity of his person and behavior, has been claimed by Englishmen as an admirable example of an Englishman. The awkward and ungainly Lincoln, with his wit and his jesting and his homely proverbs, his stories as pithy and to the point as the fables of Æsop, his shrewd management of men, his tenderness, his knowledge of human nature in every variety and condition, was, if ever man was, a typical American. Washington was a born Aristocrat, who had learned by the experience of life the justice and the beauty of Democracy. Lincoln was the child of the people, who had learned by the experience of life the value of order and strong Government.

"His was no lonely mountain peak of mind
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars,
Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface
And Thwart her genial will;

He knew to abide his time,
And can his fame abide
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,'
Till the wise years decide."

Washington had little poetry or imagination in him. He accepted and lived by the simplest maxims of morals and duty. He did not seem to care for the great things in literature or poetry. You do not find him quoting the noble sentences of the Declaration, although he did so much to make it real. Lincoln was an idealist. He was penetrated to the very depth of his soul with those eternal idealities. They moved and stirred him like a note of lofty music. But yet to his mind they were as real and practical and undoubted as the multiplication

table, or the Ten Commandments. No Republic could live long, or deserve to live long, that was not founded on them. He declared on that fateful journey to Washington, on his way to be inaugurated, that he was willing to be assassinated, if need be, for the doctrine that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no man, and no people, had the right to judge of the fitness for self-government of any other. And he was assassinated for it.

Each of these men embodied what was best in his countrymen in his generation. Each was the first citizen among a people who were like him. Each wrought in accord with his time. Washington more than any other man was the creator of a nation, of which Lincoln, more than any other man, was the Saviour. It will be for a later generation, not for us who remember Lincoln, to assign the precedence to either. Of one thing we may be sure, knowing the modesty so characteristic of both, that each, were he consulted, would yield the palm to the other.

Washington was a good neighbor and friend, hospitable and charitable. He loved his Mother and his Wife, and his kindred. He had companions and counsellors and correspondents. And yet, and yet, in spite of it all, he seems to me with his austere sense of duty and his freedom from all disturbing influences and attractions, to have dwelt in a solitude—

> "Like as a ship, that through the ocean wide,
> By conduct of some star doth make her way."

But after all, Washington has but one lesson for us; one lesson for the country; one lesson for each of his countrymen. It is the old lesson, older than history, old as Creation. That is that Justice, Veracity, Unselfishness, Character, lie at the foundation of all National and all Individual Greatness. Justice and Freedom are the Par-

ents of Fate. To the larger and surer vision there is no such thing as Fortune. Where these are we have no need to concern ourselves with what the day may bring forth. The product of the eternities will be secure. The cosmic results will be the same, whatever the daily event may be. It is to this that the story of George Washington is a perpetual witness to his countrymen. It will be their fault if they do not make their country its perpetual witness to mankind.

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